

HONORING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTER OF FRESNO

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, ICCF, its board of trustees, and members as they celebrate their 10th anniversary. ICCF is a non-profit religious institution in the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley which is dedicated providing spiritual empowerment and support to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Through their work and educational endeavors, ICCF has been an asset to our community and a true reflection of the rich diversity in our nation.

Since its inception, ICCF has promoted instruction and dialogue in hopes of establishing understanding and harmony among persons of all faiths. An active participant and leader in interfaith collaboration, activities, and discussion, ICCF hosts a number of activities and programs designed to fulfill its goals. ICCF has developed diversity training seminars to provide insight into Islam and the local Muslim community. For example, in 2005, after consultation with Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer, ICCF began providing diversity training to police officers in an effort to increase awareness and knowledge of cultural differences. In 2007, ICCF, the California Health Department, and the Marin Abused Women's Services Center led two training seminars to discuss and advocate the prevention of domestic violence.

In addition to its cultural diversity training efforts, ICCF has also served our community by providing family support services. In partnership with Child Protective Services, CPS, ICCF has ensured that children who are removed from their homes because of safety concerns are able to maintain their cultural norms and traditional practices.

ICCF has worked tirelessly to improve the well-being of our entire community. They have worked with Fresno's Poverello House, an organization that serves the hungry, homeless, and destitute, to collect food and distribute it at schools and homeless areas. Additionally, they have joined efforts with the Marjaree Mason Center, a widely recognized non-profit center for victims of domestic violence, to educate and empower some of our Valley's most vulnerable residents.

As one of the premier faith and culture centers in Central California, ICCF has welcomed students and faculty from a number of educational institutions, including Fresno State, University of Phoenix, Fresno City College, as well as local school districts. Often, visitors learn about the teachings of Islam, women in Islam, as well as Islamic perspectives in areas related to anthropology, sociology, and economics.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating and recognizing ten years of worship, leadership, and community involvement. The Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno accurately reflects the best of what America has to offer—diversity, understanding, and service.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Mr. SABLÁN. Mr. Speaker, this year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. Since We the People began in 1987, more than thirty million high school students and ninety thousand teachers have participated in this valuable program that promotes a deeper understanding of the constitutional principles that shape and guide our nation, and instills a sense of civic responsibility in young people.

We the People is an instructional program that enhances students' understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy. Through the program, students discover the relevance of the Constitution and Bill of Rights in present day terms. The We the People program is directed by the Center for Civic Education and funded by Congress through the Education for Democracy Act. This is a program Congress should continue to support.

Teams qualify for the National Finals by prevailing in their regional or state competitions. The national competition is held through a series of simulated congressional hearings, during which students testify as constitutional experts before panels of judges acting as congressional committees. The program enjoys the active participation of members of Congress, as well as support from educational, professional, business, and community organizations across the nation.

This year, more than fourteen hundred students from every part of our country will take part in the National Finals here in Washington. The competition will test students' knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, showcasing their intelligence, determination, and teamwork.

I want to recognize the 24 exceptionally talented and hard working students from Saipan Southern High School in the Northern Mariana Islands, who return to the Finals as repeat regional champions. They have spent many long hours studying and preparing for the competition. Working together and striving for excellence are defining traits of this team. I congratulate them and their teachers and coaches, and wish them all success in this year's We the People competition.

Let me acknowledge each student by name: Ms. Maria Louise Babriela Atrero; 1Mr. Rufino Aquino, Jr.; Ms. Angelica Awa-Ao; Ms. Akioni Nadine Babauta; Ms. Chelsea Marie Bartolo; Ms. Vanessa Rome Bartolo; Ms. Yunika Mae Biado; Ms. Rachel Nadine Borja; Mr. Don Marshall Davis Cabrera; Ms. Yoon Jae Chung; Ms. Teri-Sue Corpuz; Mr. Derick Dela Cruz; Ms. Jinky Marie Kintaro; Ms. Ji Won Lee; Ms. Allysha Hillary Lloren; Mr. Edward John Manibusan; Ms. Momoko Belle Nishikido; Mr. David Kido Paek; Ms. Rina Park; Mr. Seong Jin Park; Ms. Christine Maebelle Roque; Ms. Christina Marie Sablan; Mr. Mike Aries Vargas; Mr. Keisuke Yoshida.

I would also like to acknowledge the remarkable work and guidance by the team's coordinator Mr. Andrew Golden, coaches Justice John A. Manglona, Deanna Manibusan

Manglona, and Charlotte Sanders, student coach Carmen Borja, and Public School System representative Stephen Smith.

HONORING THE GAY AND LESBIAN ACTIVISTS ALLIANCE OF WASHINGTON, DC (GLAA)

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a Washington, DC institution, which I have the distinct honor and pleasure representing in this body, that has been a local leader in the struggle for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, LGBT, people: the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC, GLAA.

GLAA has, since its founding in April 1971, remained a respected and tireless advocate for political freedom for the District of Columbia and for equal rights for its residents.

GLAA continues in the vanguard of efforts to strengthen enforcement of DC's landmark Human Rights Act of 1977.

GLAA, by working with coalition partners, DC officials and the wider public, implemented a well-crafted plan of grass-roots action and education that helped achieve marriage equality in the District.

GLAA fights to ensure that LGBT residents are treated fairly and respectfully by DC agencies, from the police and fire departments to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to the DC public schools.

GLAA pushes for effective public health strategies and accountability in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

GLAA has rated all DC Mayoral and Council candidates in every election since the establishment of home rule, and uses a system noted for its fairness and nonpartisanship.

GLAA provides leadership in coalition efforts on a wide range of civil rights issues, from family rights to condom availability in prisons and public schools to police accountability.

GLAA activity opposes federal restrictions on the District's budget that adversely affect LGBT people.

GLAA enhances its outreach by maintaining a comprehensive website of LGBT advocacy materials, the GLAA Forum blog, and the DCGayEtc.com news aggregator.

On April 26, GLAA will hold its 41st Anniversary Reception honoring this year's recipients of its Distinguished Service Awards: Burgundy Crescent Volunteers, The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, Ruby Corado, Jeri Hughes, Will O'Bryan, and Jeffrey D. Richardson.

Burgundy Crescent Volunteers was founded in 2001 as a source of LGBT volunteers for gay and gay-friendly non-profit organizations in the District, Maryland, and Virginia, and brings LGBT singles and couples together for volunteer activities that are social in nature. The group, a non-profit, has over 5,000 members, who have provided over 100,000 volunteer hours to the community. Their good efforts have ranged from doing yard work for GLAA's founder, Frank Kameny, to pruning the cherry trees at the Tidal Basin.

The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, SMYAL, was founded in 1984 to promote and support self-confident, healthy, and